

INITIAL STUDY / ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION



BEFORE



AFTER

07-LA-405 K.P.41.0/47.6 (P.M. 25.5/29.6)

Federal Highway Administration
California Department of Transportation

June 2000

NEGATIVE DECLARATION (CEQA)

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

Description

The proposed project would widen Interstate 405 (San Diego Freeway) from ten to twelve lanes in order to provide one high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane in each direction. The project would extend from State Route 90 (Marina Freeway) to Interstate 10 (Santa Monica Freeway), in the Cities of Los Angeles and Culver City, in Los Angeles County, a distance of 6.6 kilometers (4.1 miles). In addition, the northbound Sawtelle off-ramp will be closed and the Culver Boulevard on-ramp will become an off-ramp. A frontage road will be added adjacent to the southbound side, connecting Sawtelle Boulevard to Braddock Drive west of I-405. The project is being proposed to relieve traffic congestion by encouraging commuters to rideshare, and is one of several such projects being considered for I-405 to provide for a continuous HOV facility.

Construction of the proposed project is expected to require approximately three years. Construction activities would be planned and conducted in such a manner as to reduce traffic delay as much as possible. The construction process would be managed by a traffic control plan. Soundwalls and retaining walls would also be constructed as part of the proposed project.

Determination

An Initial Study has been prepared by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). On the basis of this study it is determined that the proposed action will not have a significant effect upon the environment for the following reasons:

1. The project would not substantially affect topography, seismic exposure, erosion, floodplains, wetlands or water quality.
2. The proposed project will not significantly affect natural vegetation, sensitive, endangered or threatened plant or animal species, or agriculture.
3. The proposed project will not significantly affect solid wastes, or the consumption of energy and natural resources.
4. The proposed project will promote improved regional air quality.
5. The proposed project will result in increased noise levels along its route, but with the addition of soundwalls, these effects will be reduced to acceptable levels.
6. The proposed project will not significantly affect land use, public facilities or other socioeconomic features.
7. The proposed project will not significantly affect cultural resources, scenic resources, aesthetics, open space or parklands. Landscaping will be provided to mitigate the loss of existing freeway vegetation.

Original Signed by Ronald Kosinski for Raja Mitwasi

June 19, 2000

Raja Mitwasi, Deputy Director
California Department of Transportation
District 7

Date

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Note: A vertical line in the margin indicates that changes were made in the text from the Draft Environmental Document (Initial Study / Environmental Assessment) to the Final Environmental Document (Negative Declaration / Finding of No Significant Impact).

4. Environmental Evaluation

4.1 Introduction

This Section, in concert with Sections 3 and 5, constitutes the scientific and analytic basis for the comparison of effects presented in Section 2 of this IS / EA.

To determine the environmental impacts of this project, a "California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Environmental Significance Checklist" was used. The checklist provides a format for identifying likely impacts, and assists the project evaluators in focusing on relevant issues of the project. Narrative discussions of impacts, and proposed mitigation measures are found following the checklist.

4.2 List of Technical Studies/Reports

Several studies and reports were conducted and incorporated by reference in this environmental evaluation. The following studies or environmental documents have been prepared and their findings are incorporated into this report. These reports are available for review at Caltrans District 7 Office, 120 South Spring Street, Los Angeles, California.

- Project Study Report, December 1995
- City of Culver City General Plan, July 1996
- City of Los Angeles Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey Community Plan, December 1996
- Geotechnical Investigation of the LA-405 San Diego Freeway, HOV-07-LA-405 KP 41.2 to 47.6, Los Angeles County, California, September 1998
- Physical Environmental Report for the Proposed HOV Widening of the San Diego Freeway (Route 405) Between Marina Freeway (Route 90) and Santa Monica Freeway (Route 10) in Los Angeles County, September 1998, August 1999
- Construction Staging and Traffic Detour Plan, October 1998
- HOV Report, October 1998
- Noise Study Report, October 1998, October 1998, August 1999
- Traffic Study Report, October 1998, March 1999
- Natural Environment Study Report, November 1998, August 1999
- Right-of-Way Data Sheets, September 1998, November 1998, June 2000
- Location Hydraulic Study, March 1999
- Historical Property Survey Report, August 1999
- Supplemental Historical Property Survey Report, April 2000

4.3 Environmental Significance Checklist

This section evaluates the potential project impacts and where necessary, proposes mitigation measures to reduce or avoid potential impacts. Assessment of potential environmental impacts has been completed using an Environmental Significance Checklist.

The Environmental Significance Checklist is used to identify physical, biological, social and economic factors which might be impacted by the proposed project (Table 10). In some cases, environmental factors listed in the checklist will not be affected because of the nature of the project. In other cases, background studies performed in connection with the proposed project clearly indicate that the project will not affect a particular item. A "NO" answer in the first column documents these determinations. A "YES" answer in the first column indicates that a particular factor will be affected by the project and is followed by a response in the second column as to whether the effect is significant (as defined by CEQA). In some cases, even though no significant impacts have been identified, an asterisk signifies that a discussion has been included to document specific findings. Where the checklist refers to a resource that is not involved or associated with the project in any way, we have determined that there are no project-imposed effects.

Table 10 –Environmental Significance Checklist

PHYSICAL. Will the proposal (either directly or indirectly):	YES or NO	If YES, is it significant ? YES or NO
1. Appreciably change the topography or ground surface relief features?	NO	
2. Destroy, cover, or modify any unique geologic or physical features?	NO	
3. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource or locally important mineral resource recovery site, that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	NO	
4. Result in unstable earth surfaces or increase the exposure of people or property to geologic or seismic hazards?	YES	NO
5. Result in or be affected by soil erosion or siltation (whether by water or wind)?	NO	
6. Result in the increased use of fuel or energy in large amounts or in a wasteful manner?	NO	
7. Result in an increase in the rate of use of any natural resource?	NO	
8. Result in the substantial depletion of any nonrenewable resource?	NO	
9. Violate any published Federal, State, or local standards pertaining to hazardous waste, solid waste or litter control?	NO *	
10. Modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed of the ocean or any bay, inlet or lake?	NO	
11. Encroach upon a floodplain or result in or be affected by floodwaters or tidal waves?	NO	
12. Adversely affect the quantity or quality of surface water, groundwater, or public water supply?	NO *	
13. Result in the use of water in large amounts or in a wasteful manner?	NO	
14. Affect wetlands or riparian vegetation?	NO	
15. Violate or be inconsistent with Federal, State or local water quality standards?	NO *	
16. Result in changes in air movement, moisture, or temperature, or any climatic conditions?	NO	
17. Result in an increase in air pollutant emissions, adverse effects on or deterioration of ambient air quality?	NO *	
18. Results in the creation of objectionable odors?	NO	
19. Violate or be inconsistent with Federal, State, or local air standards or control plans?	NO *	
20. Result in an increase in noise levels or vibration for adjoining areas?	YES	NO
21. Result in any Federal, State, or local noise criteria being equal or exceeded?	NO *	
22. Produce new light, glare, or shadows?	NO	

Table 10 –Environmental Significance Checklist (continued)

BIOLOGICAL. Will the proposal (either directly or indirectly):	YES or NO	If YES, is it significant ? YES or NO
23. Change in the diversity of species or number of any species (including trees, shrubs, grass, microflora, and aquatic plants)?	NO *	
24. Reduction of the numbers of or encroachment upon the critical habitat or any unique, threatened or endangered species of plants?	NO	
25. Introduction of new species of plants into an area, or result in a barrier to the normal replenishment of existing species?	NO	
26. Reduction in acreage of any agricultural crop or commercial timber stand, or affect prime, unique, or other farmland of State or local importance?	NO	
27. Removal or deterioration of existing fish or wildlife habitat?	NO	
28. Change in the diversity of species, or numbers of any species of animals (birds, land animals including reptiles, fish and shellfish, benthic organisms, insects or microfauna)?	NO	
29. Reduction of the numbers of or encroachment upon the critical habitat of any unique, threatened or endangered species of animals?	NO	
30. Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional or state habitat plan?	NO	
31. Introduction of new species of animals into an area, or result in a barrier to the migration of movement of animals?	NO	
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC. Will the proposal (directly or indirectly):	YES or NO	If YES, is it significant ? YES or NO
32. Cause disruption of orderly planned development?	NO	
33. Be inconsistent with any elements of adopted community plans, policies or goals, or the California Urban Strategy?	NO	
34. Be inconsistent with a Coastal Zone Management Plan?	NO	
35. Affect the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?	YES	NO
36. Affect life-styles, or neighborhood character or stability?	YES	NO
37. Affect minority, elderly, handicapped, transit-dependent, or other specific interest groups?	NO *	
38. Divide or disrupt an established community?	NO	
39. Affect existing housing, require the acquisition of residential improvements or the displacement of people or create a demand for additional housing?	YES	NO
40. Affect employment, industry or commerce, or require the displacement of businesses or farms?	YES	NO
41. Affect property values or the local tax base?	NO *	
42. Affect any community facilities (including medical, educational, scientific, recreational, or religious institutions, ceremonial sites or sacred shrines)?	YES	NO

Table 10 –Environmental Significance Checklist (continued)

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC continued. Will the proposal (either directly or indirectly):	YES or NO	If YES, is it significant ? YES or NO
43. Affect public utilities, or police, fire, emergency or other public services?	YES	NO
44. Have substantial impact on existing transportation systems or alter present patterns of circulation or movement of people and/or goods?	YES	NO
45. Generate additional traffic?	YES	NO
46. Affect or be affected by existing parking facilities or result in demand of new parking?	NO *	
47. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	NO	
48. Involve a substantial risk of an explosion or the release of hazardous substances in the event of an accident or otherwise adversely affect overall public safety?	NO	
49. Result in alterations to waterborne, rail or air traffic?	NO	
50. Support large commercial or residential development?	NO	
51. Affect a significant archaeological or historic site, structure object, or building?	NO *	
52. Affect wild or scenic rivers or natural landmarks?	NO	
53. Affect any scenic resources or result in the obstruction of any scenic vista or view open to the public, or creation of an aesthetically offensive site open to public view?	NO	
54. Result in substantial impacts associated with construction activities (e.g., noise, dust, temporary drainage, traffic detours and temporary access, etc.)?	NO *	
55. Result in the use of any publicly-owned land from a park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge?	YES	NO
MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE		
56. Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number of, restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	NO	
57. Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals? (A short-term impact on the environment is one, which occurs in a relatively brief, definitive period of time while long-term impacts will endure well into the future.)	NO	

Table 10 – Environmental Significance Checklist (continued)

58.	Does the project have environmental effects, which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects probable future projects. It includes the effects of other projects, which interact with this project and, together, are considerable.	NO	
59.	Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	NO	